

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINGST 03261 280027Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PC-01 OPR-02 SY-05 DODE-00
PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 MCT-01 /068 W
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R 201950Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5898
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY NASSAU
AMEMBASSY PORT

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 3261

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, JM
SUBJECT: INTERNAL SECURITY: CONDITIONS WORSENING

1. ON JUNE 16, A SENIOR CIVIL SERVANT, E.A. OGILVIE, PERMANENT SECRETARY IN THE MINISTRY OF WORKS, WAS SHOT AS HE ENTERED HIS DRIVEWAY AT MIDDAY; HE DIED LATER THAT NIGHT OF HIS WOUNDS. THE IMMEDIATE REACTION WAS ONE OF PROFOUND SHOCK, LARGELY BECAUSE IT REMINDED MEMBERS OF JAMAICA'S MIDDLE CLASS THAT THEY, LIKE THE LESS ADVANTAGED DWELLERS OF JAMAICA'S SHANTY TOWNS, ARE VULNERABLE TO CRIMES OF VIOLENCE, HOWEVER, THE SHOCK NOTWITHSTANDING, THE DEATH OF OGILVIE WAS SIMPLY THE MOST DRAMATIC INCIDENT IN A RECENT SPATE OF VIOLENCE WHICH AUGURS POORLY FOR THE MONTHS AHEAD.

2. THERE ARE DAILY REPORTS IN THE PRESS OF SHOOTINGS AND STABBINGS, AND THE FREQUENCY AND NUMBER APPEAR TO BE INCREASING. WE HAVE NOT YET SOUGHT TO DEVELOP DETAILED STATISTICS, A TASK WHICH IS MADE DIFFICULT BY POOR RECORDS KEPT BY THE JAMAICA CONSTABULARY AND THE RELUCTANCE OF MANY JAMAICANS TO REPORT CRIMES.
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HOWEVER, A QUICK GLANCE AT THIS WEEKEND'S PRESS REVEALS THAT AT LEAST FIVE PERSONS HAVE DIED SINCE MIDNIGHT JUNE 16/17. THESE HAVE INCLUDED ONE OFF-DUTY POLICEMAN AND ONE JAMAICA DEFENSE FORCE (JDF) SOLDIER ON PATROL IN THE HILLS JUST EAST OF KINGSTON; IN THE LATTER INSTANCE, THE SEVEN-MEMBER JOINT POLICE-JDF PATROL ENCOUNTERED AN ARMED BAND AND, IN THE

ENSUING FIRE-FIGHT, THE SOLDIER WAS MORTALLY WOUNDED.

3. WHILE INCIDENTS INVOLVING JAMAICANS ARE APPARENTLY INCREASING, WE ALSO DETECT AN INCREASE IN THOSE DIRECTED AT NON-JAMAICANS. OUR COLLEAGUES AT THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION REPORT SEVERAL INCIDENTS INVOLVING MEMBERS OF THEIR STAFF. AN EXPATRIATE TEACHER AT THE PRIORY SCHOOL WAS ROBBED, STABBED AND BEATEN WHEN HE STOPPED ONE NIGHT TO REMOVE BUILDING BLOCKS FROM A VERY WELL-TRAVELLED ROAD. ROBBERIES AND ATTEMPTED ROBBERIES HAVE SHOWN AN INCREASE. PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS HAVE BEEN CONFRONTED AND ROBBED; ONE ONE OCCASION, THE PCV WAS CUT ON THE FACE. TWO OF THESE INCIDENTS WERE AT MIDDAY IN FRONT OF PEACE CORPS HEADQUARTERS. BURGLARIES AND BURGLARY ATTEMPTS ARE UP, BUT DO NOT APPEAR TO HAVE YET REACHED PAST PEAKS.

4. PRIME MINISTER MANLEY ARRIVED HOME FROM LONDON AND HAVANA YESTERDAY (SEE KINGSTON 3258) AND IN THE COURSE OF HIS BRIEF AIRPORT REMARKS COMMENTED ON THE DETERIORATING INTERNAL SECURITY SITUATION. AFTER EXPRESSING HIS SORROW AT THE DEATH OF OGILVIE, THE PRIME MINISTER REMINDED HIS LISTENERS THAT THE STATE OF EMERGENCY (SOE), LIFTED ONLY TWO WEEKS AGO, HAD BEEN IMPOSED EXACTLY ONE YEAR EARLIER. HE SAID
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THAT THOSE WHO CONTINUE TO ENGAGE IN VIOLENCE WILL BE ONCE AGAIN PLACED IN DETENTION, AND THIS STATEMENT, TAKEN TOGETHER WITH THAT ABOUT THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOE, LED TO PROMPT SPECULATION OF A POSSIBLE REIMPOSITION OF THE SOE. MANLEY ALSO REVEALED SOMETHING OF THE MOTIVE FOR OGILVIE'S SHOOTING-- AND THE DEEP CONCERN OF THE CIVIL SERVANTS-- WHEN HE WARNED AGAINST THE USE OF VIOLENCE TO INFLUENCE GOVERNMENT.

5. SINCE JAMAICA HAS A CERTAIN REPUTATION FOR VIOLENCE, RECENT EVENTS MIGHT, IN OTHER TIMES, BE VIEWED WITH SOME EQUANIMITY. HOWEVER, IT IS INCREASINGLY CLEAR THAT JAMAICA IS BEGINNING TO REACH, IF NOT ACTUALLY SCRAPE, THE BOTTOM OF ITS ECONOMIC BARREL. STORES ARE NOW DRAWING DOWN INVENTORY, AND THE PIPELINE IS EMPTY. MANUFACTURERS LACK RAW MATERIALS, AND HAVE BEGUN TO OUT BACK PRODUCTION; STAFF IS BEING RE-TRENCHED. THE PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATION OF JAMAICA (PSOJ) HAS ISSUED A REPORT DRAWING THESE SAME CONCLUSIONS, AND URGING THE GOVERNMENT TO INFORM PRIVATE FIRMS-- AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES--

WHEN FOREIGN EXCHANGE WILL BE AVAILABLE SO THAT ADE-
QUATE PLANNING CAN BE UNDERTAKEN. IF THE PRESENT
TREND IS NOT REVERSED IN THE NEAR TERM, THE COMBINA-
TION OF SHORTAGES OF CONSUMER NECESSITIES AND THE
INCREASING UNEMPLOYMENT CAUSED BY THE ABSENCE OF RAW
MATERIALS WILL BE VERY "DESTABLIZING". IT MAY BE
THAT THE VIOLENCE WHICH HAS GROWN EVIDENT OVER THE
VERY RECENT PAST IS JUST THE BEGINNING. IT WAS,
AFTER ALL, PRIME MINISTER MANLEY WHO DESCRIBED THE
SHOOTING OF OGILVIE AS REPRESENTING "ANARCHISTIC
BEHAVIOR", AND WE ASSUME HE KNOWS THE DEFINITION OF
"ANARCHY" AND USED THE WORDS PURPOSELY.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
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